

your monthly mortgage payments. Some of you worry about the impact of rising energy costs on fueling your cars and heating your homes. You expect your elected leaders in Washington to address these pressures on our economy and give you more options to help you deal with them. And I have put forth several proposals to do so.

In the last month, Congress has responded to some of my initiatives. They passed a good energy bill, they passed a temporary patch to protect middle class families from the burden of the Alternative Minimum Tax, and they passed a law that will help protect families from higher taxes when their lenders reduce their mortgage debt. But this is only a start. Congress needs to do more to decrease America's dependence on oil. Congress needs to pass legislation that will help make health care coverage more affordable for small businesses and workers who buy their own policies. And Congress needs to act quickly on the rest of my proposals to help families struggling with rising mortgage payments keep their homes.

Most of all, we need to set a good example in Washington by being careful with your money. I'm disappointed that leaders in Congress sent me a massive spending bill that includes about 9,800 earmarks. Earmarks are special interest items that are slipped into big spending bills like this one, often at the last hour, without discussion or debate. Among the earmarks Congress

approved was one for a prison museum and another for a sailing school. In the last election, congressional leaders ran on a promise that they would reform earmarks. They made some progress, but not nearly enough. So my administration is reviewing options to address wasteful earmark spending.

As we address earmarks, we also must restrain spending, keep taxes low, and continue on a path towards a balanced budget. And that is what the budget I submit in February will do. You work hard for your money and to live within your means. As you provide for your families, the last thing you need is wasteful spending that will lead to a tax hike. My resolution for the New Year is this: to work with Congress to keep our economy growing, to keep your tax burden low, and to ensure that the money you send to Washington is spent wisely or not at all.

Thank you for listening, and happy New Year.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 28 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 28, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Appointment of Representative Roger F. Wicker as United States Senator for Mississippi *December 31, 2007*

Today Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour announced the appointment of Representative Roger Wicker to serve as United States Senator for the State of Mississippi, succeeding Senator Trent Lott.

I welcome Representative Wicker's appointment and commend Governor Barbour for the selection. Representative Wicker's leadership has earned the respect of his constituents and his colleagues in

the House of Representatives. He is an advocate for our men and women in uniform and a champion of modernizing our health care system, and he shares Senator Lott's

commitment to promote the interests of the people of Mississippi.

I look forward to working with Roger in his new role representing Mississippi in the United States Senate.

Statement on Signing the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007

December 31, 2007

Today, I have signed into law S. 2271, the "Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007." I share the deep concern of the Congress over the continued violence in Darfur perpetrated by the Government of Sudan and rebel groups. My Administration will continue its efforts to bring about significant improvements in the conditions in Sudan through sanctions against the Government of Sudan and high-level diplomatic engagement and by supporting the deployment of peacekeepers in Darfur.

This Act purports to authorize State and local governments to divest from companies doing business in named sectors in Sudan and thus risks being interpreted as insu-

lating from Federal oversight State and local divestment actions that could interfere with implementation of national foreign policy. However, as the Constitution vests the exclusive authority to conduct foreign relations with the Federal Government, the executive branch shall construe and enforce this legislation in a manner that does not conflict with that authority.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
December 31, 2007.

NOTE: S. 2271, approved December 31, was assigned Public Law No. 110-174.

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2008

December 31, 2007

As we enter this New Year, we reflect on the past and look forward to a promising year ahead.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a robust economy. Thanks to America's workers and entrepreneurs, our economy grew at a vigorous rate last year. Keeping taxes low and exercising fiscal restraint helped ensure that the number of jobs increased and the deficit once again fell ahead of schedule. The underpinnings of our economy have proven strong, competi-

tive, and resilient enough to overcome the challenges we face. In the coming year, we will continue to encourage growth in the economy so Americans have more money to invest in their businesses, spend on their families, and put aside for the future.

In addition to our efforts here at home, the United States continued its work to spread freedom and peace around the world. America is determined to defeat terrorists and extremists, and we will remain